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Statistical Bulletin

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Volume 26 JUNE 1945 *Number 6*

Age of American Military Leaders

1. THE NAVY

THE second World War is without precedent as regards the magnitude and complexity of military operations, the number of combatants involved, and the global character of the conflict. Unprecedented also have been the tasks and responsibilities of our military leaders. It is natural to inquire about the age of the men who have played so vital a role in defeating Germany and her Axis satellites, and who are now planning and building the road to victory in the Pacific. The present article deals with the age distribution of Admirals in our Navy; subsequent articles will give similar analyses for the highest ranking officers in the Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Army.

Our Navy has made outstanding contributions to victory, both within its own sphere of operations and in coordination with the Army and with the military forces of our Allies. The large-scale use of amphibious warfare, the amazing role of naval air power, the problem of maintaining a continuous flow of troops and supplies over far-flung lines of communication, particularly in the Pacific, and the successful campaign against the submarine menace are only some of the developments which have written a new chapter in naval history.

To carry on its many and varied wartime activities, the American Navy has expanded tremendously since Pearl Harbor, and it now has the largest fleet in the world. At the same time, there has been a vast increase in naval personnel. In the present survey we wish to examine what effect the wartime increase has had on the age composition of the high command of the Navy. The facts are shown graphically in the chart on the following page.

The average age of line Admirals in our Navy has been lowered by 2.2 years between May 1, 1940, just before the vast expansion program was launched, and the present time (May 1, 1945). Currently, the average age of Admirals of the line is 56.4 years. Five years ago it was 58.6 years; the comparable figure for 1918, during the last war, was slightly higher, namely, 58.7 years. The reduction in average age during the present war has been effected

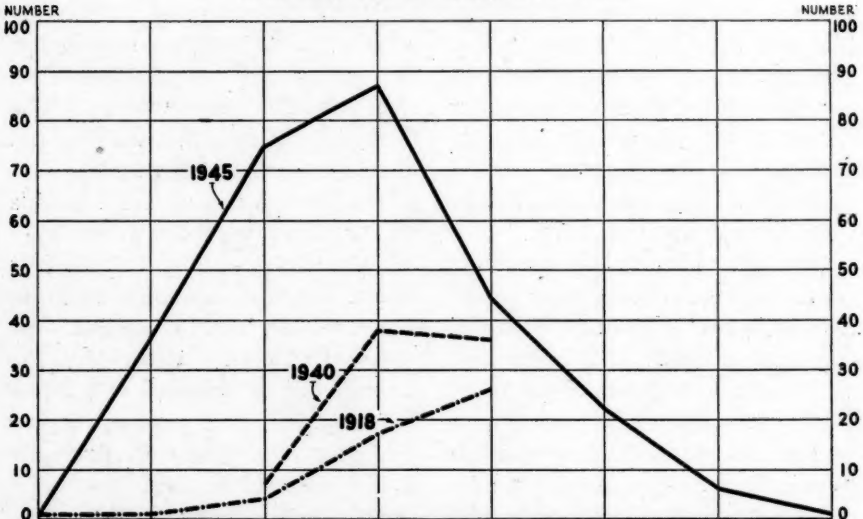
despite the recall to active duty of a considerable number of retired officers; the latter group now comprise almost one fifth of the total number of Admirals on active duty. What has occurred, of course, has been the promotion of a group of younger men to ranks of high responsibility. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that at present there are 38 Admirals of the line under 50 years of age, one in every seven, whereas five years earlier there were none under 50.

As one would expect, the average age of our line Admirals varies directly with their seniority of rank. (See table on page 3.) The three Fleet Admirals were all in their 60's, as of May 1st of this year; the oldest of them, William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the President, reached his 70th birthday on May 6th. Somewhat younger is Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, who is 66 years of age. The youngest of the group is Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the U. S. Pacific Fleet and the Pacific Ocean areas; he is 60. The average for the three is 65 years. For Admirals, the average age is 63.6 years; for Vice Admirals, 59.6; and for Rear Admirals, 55 years. The latter group, by far the most numerous, shows the widest range of ages, from 42 to 75 years.

Current interest, of course, is centered in the Pacific theater of war

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ADMIRALS* OF THE LINE ON ACTIVE DUTY UNITED STATES NAVY

AGES AS OF MAY 1ST 1945, 1940 AND 1918



*Includes Fleet Admirals, Admirals, Vice Admirals and Rear Admirals

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Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ADMIRALS OF THE LINE, BY RANK, OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY ON ACTIVE DUTY MAY 1, 1945 (INCLUDING RETIRED OFFICERS RECALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY)

AGE GROUP	TOTAL NUMBER IN EACH AGE	FLEET ADMIRALS	ADMIRALS	VICE ADMIRALS	REAR ADMIRALS
40 to 44	1	—	—	—	1
45 to 49	37	—	—	—	37
50 to 54	75	—	—	4	71
55 to 59	87	—	4	21	62
60 to 64	44	1	4	15	24
65 to 69	22	2	6	5	9
70 to 74	6	—	2	1	3
75	1	—	—	—	1
Total number in each rank	273	3	16	46	208
Average age in years	56.4	65.0	63.6	59.6	55.0

NOTE—This table was compiled from the personnel list made available through the courteous cooperation of the Navy Department.

where the Navy has carried particularly heavy burdens. The complete list of top-ranking personnel in the Pacific is not at hand, but it appears that, by and large, the outstanding leaders in this area tend to be younger than average. It has already been noted that Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, is the youngest of the Fleet Admirals. Similarly, Thomas C. Kinkaid, Commander of the Seventh Fleet operating in the southwest Pacific, at age 57 is the youngest of the Admirals. Among the other well-known Admirals in this area who are below average age for their rank, are Raymond A. Spruance, Commander of the Fifth Fleet, who is 58 years old; Royal E. Ingersoll, Commander of the Western Sea Frontier, who is 61; and William F. Halsey, Commander of the Third Fleet, who is 62 years.

A large majority of our naval leaders have been promoted to their present rank only since the outbreak of the war in Europe. How exceedingly well they have discharged their vastly increased duties and responsibilities is now a matter of history. Even while our country was still gathering its military strength in June 1942, our forces in the Battle of Midway subjected the Japanese Navy to its first decisive defeat in 350 years. Moreover, during the past year and a half our Pacific offensive has carried the battle more than 3,000 miles westward—from the Marshall Islands into the South China Sea and to the Japanese mainland itself. Our huge success is a tribute to the vigor, initiative, and sound training of our naval leaders.

Medical Progress Advanced by Life Insurance

ON THE same day recently, the press carried two items. One was the announcement that the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company was closing its tuberculosis sanatorium for its employees; the other that the Life insurance companies were establishing a fund to support extensive research on diseases of the heart and related conditions. These two announcements symbolize the closing of one era in American medicine and public health and the beginning of another.

The Metropolitan, in the 32 years that its Sanatorium at Mount McGregor was in operation, clearly demonstrated that an organization which is guided by enlightened good will and prepared to provide the requisite facilities, can practically eliminate tuberculosis among its employees. From the very beginning it was realized that the program, to be effective, must be well planned and inclusive. The Company launched a systematic effort, through annual medical examinations, to search out cases of tuberculosis, particularly in the early stages. The patients were given the benefit of adequate sanatorium care. They were not only encouraged but given the opportunity to remain under treatment without cost to themselves until their condition warranted returning to work. Freedom from economic worries helped measurably toward their recovery.

That the program was eminently successful is indicated by a recent study, which showed that of all patients followed for at least 10 years after discharge from the Sanatorium, one half were either at work or able to work at the end of this period. Among patients who had been brought under treatment in the early stage of the disease and whose condition on discharge from the Sanatorium was considered satisfactory, the proportion at work or able to work after at least 10 years was nearly 80 percent.

It is not difficult to understand how such a well-conceived plan, together with the general decline in tuberculosis, would result in a reduction in the number of employees to be cared for and in the length of treatment. In the early years of the Sanatorium a very considerable proportion of the beds were occupied, but in recent years the number of tuberculosis patients was reduced to a mere handful, not enough to justify the maintenance of a large institution. The success of the Company in virtually eradicating tuberculosis among its personnel has served as a guide to other employers and, in fact, to the whole tuberculosis movement. If in the general population the cases of the disease were discovered early, given adequate treatment and, where necessary, provided with suitable employment, the further decline in tuberculosis would be materially accelerated.

With the many victories that have been won in the battle against tuberculosis and the infectious diseases

generally, the emphasis in the public health program now naturally shifts in another direction. This changing emphasis is highlighted by the announcement of the Life insurance companies, including the Metropolitan, that they are making funds available for an effective attack on the more difficult problem of the cardiac diseases. Fundamental research is evidently called for to discover the systemic causes which bring about premature physical breakdown, and to learn how best to stay the degenerative processes of advancing age. It is clear that many deaths from the diseases of the heart and arteries can be prevented or at least postponed.

Diseases of the cardiovascular system account for almost one half of all the deaths in the United States. Many deaths from these conditions are preceded by long periods of incapacitating illness. Moreover, patients often require medical and nursing care, and in many cases hospitalization. The economic and social loss from these diseases obviously reaches an enormous total. With the continued aging of the population as a whole, the toll of disability and death from these causes will undoubtedly increase. The research program of the Life insurance companies, therefore, has immense possibilities for public service and will be watched hopefully by all who work in the field of public health and preventive medicine.

Early Marriages Most Frequent in the South

THE chances of marriage before age 20 are greatest for girls living in the South, particularly for those living in small towns; the chances are least of all in the urban centers of the northeastern part of the United States. This relative disadvantage of the city is found in all sections of the country, as can be seen from the table on page 6, which is based upon 1940 census reports for native white women.

In the country as a whole, 11.1 percent, or one ninth, of the native white girls of ages 15 to 19 were married at the time of the census. In our larger cities—those of 250,000 and over—only 6.3 percent of the girls in these ages were married; in the smaller cities—down to 2,500 inhabitants—the figure was 9.9 percent, and in the smaller towns and villages it was 15.1 percent. In farm areas the proportion married among these very young girls was not quite so high—13.6 percent.

The postponement of marriage by very young girls in urban communities is no doubt in part connected with their disposition to continue schooling longer than their rural cousins. The higher proportion of very young married girls in small towns and villages, as compared with those on farms, may be traced to their greater opportunities for social contacts.

As to geographic distribution, the table shows an increase in the chances for early marriage as one

proceeds from East to West along the northern tier of the country. The South, however, had the largest proportion of married girls in the very young age group—namely, 18 percent for the region as a whole, and 20.6 percent for girls in communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants.

Although the best chances for *early* marriage may be with the girls in our small towns and villages, the chances for *eventual* marriage appear to be greatest for those who remain on the farm. The data in the table relating to ages 45 to 49 are indicative of the situation. At these ages, 90.2 percent of the native white women in the United States as a whole had been married by 1940. The proportion varied from a low of 86.1 percent in cities of 250,000 and over, to a high of 94.8 percent in farm areas. Women on the farm had the greatest advantage in this regard in each section of the country, while those in the city everywhere had the least. A possible factor in this situation may be a

PERCENT OF NATIVE WHITE WOMEN WHO HAD EVER MARRIED, ACCORDING TO AGE; FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ITS GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS, WITH REGARD TO SIZE OF COMMUNITY, 1940

REGION; SIZE OF COMMUNITY	AGE						
	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49
United States	11.1	51.9	77.1	85.1	88.2	89.5	90.2
Cities of							
250,000 and over	6.3	42.6	70.0	80.4	84.0	85.1	86.1
25,000–250,000	9.9	48.3	74.1	82.8	86.4	87.7	88.2
2,500–25,000	9.9	49.5	76.5	84.7	87.5	89.0	90.1
Rural nonfarm	15.1	62.6	84.2	89.7	91.5	92.3	92.2
Rural farm	13.6	58.6	82.9	89.1	92.2	94.0	94.8
North East	5.0	39.2	68.9	80.0	83.5	85.2	86.1
Urban	3.9	36.5	66.8	78.3	82.0	83.7	84.6
Rural nonfarm	8.0	49.7	77.8	86.5	88.3	89.6	89.6
Rural farm	8.7	45.8	72.4	83.3	89.0	91.8	92.7
North Central	9.3	51.0	77.4	85.3	88.4	89.8	90.4
Urban	8.4	47.4	74.4	83.0	86.4	87.6	88.5
Rural nonfarm	12.3	60.2	83.3	89.2	91.0	92.0	91.1
Rural farm	8.9	54.4	81.7	89.0	92.0	93.8	94.7
South	18.0	62.7	82.8	88.3	90.9	92.1	92.8
Urban	16.5	58.4	78.6	85.7	88.7	89.5	90.3
Rural nonfarm	20.6	69.1	87.3	91.0	92.9	93.8	93.8
Rural farm	17.7	63.1	84.6	89.7	92.4	94.2	95.0
West	13.6	60.7	82.8	89.2	91.8	92.2	92.8
Urban	11.6	56.0	80.0	87.1	90.0	90.6	91.0
Rural nonfarm	18.9	72.6	88.2	93.3	94.9	94.4	95.5
Rural farm	12.5	60.5	86.6	92.0	95.3	95.8	96.6

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Population, Differential Fertility, 1940 and 1910—Women by Number of Children Under 5 Years Old*, Washington, D. C., 1945, Tables 5 and 61.

tendency for single women in rural areas to move to urban centers for employment.

While the girls of the South have the best chances of early marriage, this does not mean that they have also the best chances of eventual marriage; that distinction goes to the girls in the West, irrespective of whether they are living in cities or whether they have remained on the farm. As a matter of fact, an unmarried woman of middle age is rare in the farming areas of the West; 96.6 percent of the native white women in the age group 45 to 49 years in these localities were married or had been married, according to the census of 1940.

It is to be noted from the table that there is relatively much greater variation in the chances of *early* marriage throughout our country than in the chances of *eventual* marriage. The former apparently are more sensitive to the particular economic and social circumstances prevailing in the various regions.

Fertility of American Women in Relation to Husband's Occupation

IN THE 30-year interval between 1910 and 1940, the reproductive rate among American women of all economic classes decreased materially. At the same time there was a narrowing of the range of the reproductive rates from class to class. The order of rank of the several classes is essentially unchanged: those engaged in farming still have the highest birth rates, while professional and clerical people continue at the bottom of the list. These indications are derived from census data which show the number of children under 5 years of age per 1,000 native white women living with their husbands. The pertinent facts are set forth in the table on page 8 and relate to women* of ages 15 to 49.

In 1940 three groups practically tied at the head of the list—namely, women whose husbands were either farmers or farm managers, farm laborers or foremen, and laborers of other kind; each of these groups had, in round numbers, 620 children under 5 years per 1,000 women. At the other end, with rates in the neighborhood of 360 per 1,000, were wives whose husbands were proprietors, managers, officials, professional or semiprofessional persons, or clerks. Between these two extremes were found, with rates of descending order, first, wives of semiskilled workers, then those of skilled workers (craftsmen and foremen), and third, those of service workers (such as janitors, waiters, and barbers).

Although the order of rank of the occupation classes in 1940 was practically the same as that in 1910, the proportions of children under 5 years per 1,000 women had not only greatly diminished in the interval, but the

*This study was restricted to women in their first marriage, counting only children born to them.

CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD PER 1,000 NATIVE WHITE WOMEN OF AGES 15 TO 49 MARRIED ONCE AND LIVING WITH HUSBAND, ACCORDING TO MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP OF HUSBAND, UNITED STATES, 1940 AND 1910*

MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP OF HUSBAND	CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD PER 1,000 WOMEN		PERCENT DECREASE FROM 1910 TO 1940
	1940	1910	
Farmers and farm managers	629	836	24.8
Farm laborers and foremen	618	745	17.0
Laborers, except farm and mine	622	705	11.8
Operatives (semiskilled)	476	643	26.0
Craftsmen, foremen	446	602	25.9
Service workers	402	524	23.3
Proprietors, managers, officials	368	525	29.9
Professional and semiprofessional	361	468	22.9
Clerks, sales and kindred	359	459	21.8

*The rates were standardized for age on the basis of the age distribution of the total female population at ages 15 to 49 in the United States, 1940. Source for basic rates: U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Population, Differential Fertility, 1940 and 1910—Women by Number of Children Under 5 Years Old*, Washington, D. C., 1945, Tables 41 and 42.

extreme variation from class to class had narrowed in the course of the three decades. For example, in 1910, the rate among wives of farmers and farm managers was 836 per 1,000, among wives of farm laborers and foremen it was 745, and among other laborers it was 705; but by 1940 all these classes were at the practically uniform level of 620. A similar situation is observed with regard to the last three classes in the table, which in 1910 ranged from 525 to 459 children per 1,000 women, whereas in 1940 they had all three been reduced to much the same level of about 360.

The greatest decrease in rate from 1910 to 1940, just short of 30 percent, was observed among wives of proprietors, managers, and officials —a class that can hardly afford a further diminution in fertility. On the other hand, a decrease of only 11.8 percent is found among wives of laborers, other than those on farms or in mines.

The results reported above, based upon census data for the total United States, essentially confirm the findings derived from various local studies. The decline in the fertility of American women has proceeded at an uneven pace in the several economic segments of the population, and at the same time the total range of variation from one economic group to another has been narrowed.

This study, being based on data for 1940 and preceding decades, represents prewar conditions. Inasmuch as the war has brought a marked increase in the birth rate, the further development in reproductive rates, with respect to occupational groups, will be awaited with interest when the data become available.

The Passing of Our Foreign-Born

THE foreign-born among us have been rapidly decreasing in number. While they now account for less than one tenth of our total population, they currently contribute more than one fifth to the total deaths of white persons. This situation is the result of two decades of almost complete cessation of immigration and the consequent attenuation of the younger age groups. The foreign-born are as a whole a rapidly aging population. The changes in the characteristics of our foreign-born from 1920 to 1940 are presented in the table on page 10, together with comparable data for the native white population.

During these two decades, the foreign-born population of this country decreased by one sixth to less than 11,500,000, while the native white population increased by almost one third to 107,000,000. Toward the growth of the native population, the foreign-born and the native-born together contributed 2,500,000 births in 1920 and about 2,200,000 births in 1930 and in 1940. Deaths among the native-born in 1940 were less than half the number of births.

In contrast to the steady accretion of the native population by an appreciable excess of births over deaths, the foreign-born have been decreasing in number by a marked excess of deaths over new arrivals, particularly in fairly recent years. In the decade from 1930 to 1940 our net alien immigration averaged only 7,000 a year. Deaths of the foreign-born, on the other hand, totaled 264,000 in 1940 alone.

Without a continuous inflow of immigrants to maintain the ranks at the younger ages, our foreign-born are rapidly moving up toward the more advanced years of life. Whereas in 1920 about 15 percent of their number were under age 25, the figure was only 4 percent in 1940. On the other hand, the proportion at ages 65 and older almost doubled within this period, from not quite 10 percent in 1920 to 18 percent in 1940. The native-born did not show such striking changes. True enough, there was a sizable diminution between 1920 and 1940 in the proportion of native-born at the younger ages, but the proportion at the older ages (65 and older) increased only from 4 percent to 6 percent.

How these changes in the age constitution of the native-born and of the foreign-born affected the distribution of their ages at death is evident in the lowest group of figures in the table. The recent picture (1940) shows that 95 percent of the deaths among our foreign-born are at ages 45 and older, the comparable figure for the native-born being 74 percent. On the other hand, deaths at ages under 25 among foreign-born were less than ½ of 1 percent of the total in this group, whereas the natives had about 16 percent of their total deaths within that age period.

It is extremely doubtful whether our country will open its doors to an

influx of immigrants in the next few decades. Without such renewed immigration the foreign-born will rapidly pass from the American scene. The National Resources Planning Board has estimated that, without immigration, the foreign-born among us, who constituted less than 10 percent of our white population in 1940, will decrease to less than 5 percent by 1960, and to only 1 percent by 1980.

PRINCIPAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIVE-BORN WHITE AND FOREIGN-BORN WHITE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1920, 1930, AND 1940

POPULATION CHARACTERISTIC	NATIVE-BORN			FOREIGN-BORN		
	1920	1930	1940	1920	1930	1940
Population						
Number, thousands	81,108	96,303	106,796	13,713	13,983	11,419
Percent of total*	85.5	87.3	90.3	14.5	12.7	9.7
Age distribution, percent						
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 25	54.7	52.4	46.6	14.6	10.6	4.0
25–44	27.1	27.6	30.1	45.8	42.1	30.2
45–64	14.2	15.3	17.4	29.9	35.3	47.8
65 and older	4.0	4.7	5.9	9.7	12.0	18.0
Births, thousands†	2,497	2,227	2,200	.....	.....	.....
Net average annual alien immigrant admissions in previous decade, thousands‡	.....	.....	.....	359	306	7
Deaths						
Number, thousands	¶	¶	952	¶	¶	264
Percent of total*	¶	¶	78.3	¶	¶	21.7
Age distribution, percent§						
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 25	39.5	26.4	15.6	4.0	1.8	.4
25–44	15.5	13.1	10.8	19.4	12.9	5.0
45–64	18.8	24.0	26.5	31.0	35.3	34.8
65 and older	26.2	36.5	47.1	45.6	50.0	59.8

*Based on total for white population only.

†Source for 1920 and 1930: Thompson and Whelpton, *Population Trends in the United States*, page 263. The figure for 1940 is based upon recorded births increased by 6.4 percent to allow for under-registration.

‡The figures relate to fiscal years ending June 30th and include a very small number of colored lives.

¶Data for the entire United States not available.

§These percentages relate to the 34 states, and the District of Columbia, which constitute the Death Registration States of 1920; the percentages for this area in 1940 differ little from those for the total United States.

Comparative Data on the Causes of Death Among Industrial Policyholders

The following table shows the mortality among Industrial policyholders for May 1945 and May 1944, together with the death rates for the first five months of 1945, 1944, and 1943.

DEATH RATES* PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS FROM SELECTED CAUSES
WEEKLY PREMIUM-PAYING INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS
METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

CAUSES OF DEATH	ANNUAL RATE PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS*				
	May 1945	May 1944	Year to Date: End of May		
			1945	1944	1943
ALL CAUSES—TOTAL	889.6	790.6	917.3	872.9	843.3
—Excluding war deaths	*752.4*	*758.7*	*785.3*	*843.0*	*832.3*
Typhoid fever	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2
Measles	.4	1.3	.2	1.4	.7
Scarlet fever	.3	.7	.3	.6	.5
Whooping cough	.4	.3	.8	.5	1.4
Diphtheria	.6	.2	.7	.7	.8
Influenza	2.5	4.9	4.6	17.3	8.3
Pneumonia (all forms)	28.4	34.2	35.2	49.4	48.5
Tuberculosis (all forms)	40.2	41.2	38.3	42.8	41.2
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	36.2	37.8	34.7	38.8	37.4
Syphilis	8.3	9.4	9.0	10.0	10.2
Cancer (all forms)	111.0	107.7	112.9	109.0	107.5
Diabetes mellitus	24.9	25.4	26.9	31.6	30.8
Cerebral hemorrhage	68.7	68.1	70.7	72.8	71.9
Diseases of the coronary arteries and angina pectoris	64.3	59.7	70.2	67.5	66.4
Other chronic heart diseases†	156.6	167.4	170.7	187.3	189.3
Diarrhea and enteritis	3.5	4.0	3.3	3.4	3.2
Appendicitis	4.4	5.0	4.8	5.3	5.4
Chronic nephritis	43.1	43.9	47.4	51.4	54.4
Puerperal state—total	2.8	4.1	3.7	4.2	4.2
Suicides	6.6	5.1	6.1	6.3	6.3
Homicides	3.0	2.1	2.7	2.6	3.4
Accidents—total	50.8	51.5	54.0	53.1	47.8
Home accidents	8.3	9.5	10.6	11.4	13.1
Occupational accidents	4.3	5.9	5.2	5.6	6.4
Motor vehicle accidents	10.6	11.2	12.4	14.3	11.8
War deaths (enemy action)	137.2	31.9	132.0	29.9	11.0
All other causes of death	131.2	122.2	122.4	125.6	129.9

*The rates for 1945 are subject to slight correction, since they are based on provisional estimates of lives exposed to risk.

†International List (1940) titles 92, 93 (c), (d), (e), and 95.

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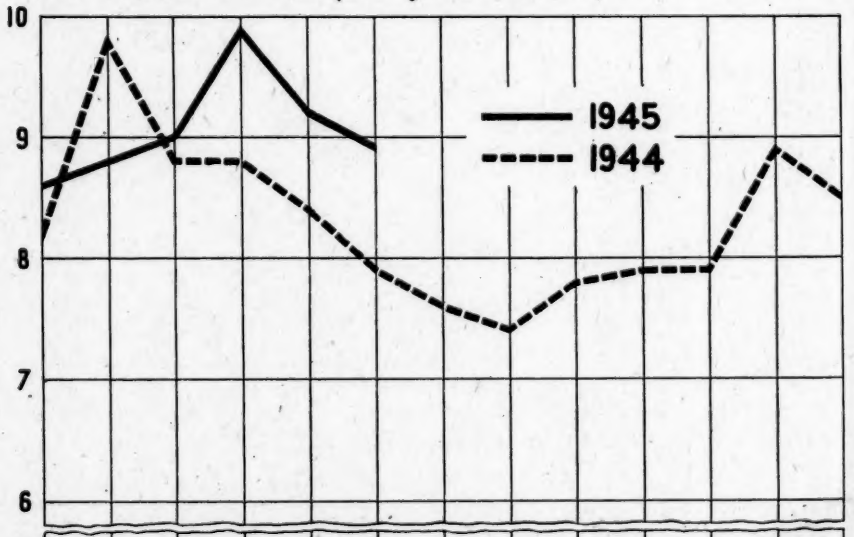
MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES*

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT, WEEKLY PREMIUM-PAYING BUSINESS

DEATH RATES PER 1,000 ANNUAL BASIS (*1945 figures are provisional*)



(DEC)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1944	9.8	8.8	8.8	8.4	7.9	7.6	7.4	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.9	8.5
1945	8.8	9.0	9.9	9.2	8.9							

**Including war deaths*

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